

The Town of Otsego Town Board held a Workshop on the 19th day of March 2024 at 1:00 PM at the Town Building in Fly Creek, NY. to review a Local Law *Draft* Regulating Solar Energy Systems.

Town Board Members Present:

Benjamin Bauer	Supervisor
Deborah Dalton	Councilperson
Chris Kjolhede	Councilperson
Patricia Kennedy	Councilperson

Also Present:

Pamela Deane	Town Clerk
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Supervisor Bauer called the Solar Law Workshop to order and asked everyone in attendance to please rise for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Supervisor Bauer introduced landscaper and owner of *EPIC* Kevin Green and his Project Estimator Frank Novak, who spoke on the importance of maintaining solar panels. Green stated that he has maintained hundreds of different sites which includes mowing, weed whacking, and spraying herbicides to kill vegetation such as thistles, burdocks, and black locust. Green warned that if weeds are not kept under control, they can cause the solar panels to malfunction or break. The final grade of a site is also important, making sure all stumps and large rocks are removed. If the large rocks and stumps are not removed it makes it impossible to maintain weeds between panels. Green suggested that a minimum spacing measurement is put in the law that will allow a lawn mower to mow between solar panels. He has turned down jobs because there was not enough distance between rows to go between panels.

Green recommended that solar farms be maintained six times a year, possibly have panels painted to avoid glare, to have the Town withhold money in an escrow account rather than a bond, (to many bond companies go bankrupt) and be sure to stipulate who is ultimately responsible for the clean up after solar panels are no longer being used. Green warned that it is not uncommon for the Solar Companies to change hands frequently and many times leave the area and are unreachable.

Town Residents Eileen Kukenberger and Edward Hobbie could not see the advantages of allowing Solar Farms into the Town. Kukenberger was not in favor of the Zones being changed to accommodate the allowance of Solar Farms in residential areas. She and her husband just built a new house and now a Solar Farm Company wants to put in a Solar Farm directly across the street from her and her husband's home. Currently Solar Farms are not permitted nor were they when they built their new house. Had they known they never would have built their new house.

Supervisor Bauer suggested considering adding a Host Community Agreement or a Pilot Agreement. He thought they might be beneficial to residents. Another benefit is Solar Farms will change the value of the land assessment where they are located, which may lower taxes.

The Town Board thanked Mr. Green and Mr. Novak for their suggestions and time.

The Town Board continued to review more of the proposed Solar Law submitted by Supervisor Bauer making modifications along the way.

It was decided to schedule the next Solar Law Workshop for April 2<sup>nd</sup>, at 1:00 pm.

MOTION by Councilperson Kennedy, seconded by Councilperson Dalton, to adjourn.

MOTION CARRIED: All were in favor.

Meeting was adjourned at 2:20 PM.

Respectfully Submitted

Pamela Deane  
Town Clerk